

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 NEA-10 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-10 SPC-03

TRSE-00 SCEM-02 PRS-01 SCI-06 INT-08 COME-00 L-03 H-03

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 OMB-01 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 SSO-00 DRC-01 /127 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5993

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION USEC BUSSELS PRIORITY UNN

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

AMCONSUL NICE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ARIS 0840

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, FR

SUBJECT: FURTHER FRENCH REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S INVITATION
TO ENERGY MEETING

REF: PARIS 743

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: GEORGES SUFFERT, DEPUTY EDITOR IN CHIEF
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AFTER COMING OUT OF MEETING WITH FONMIN JOBERT, QUAI PRESS

SPOKESMANDELA YE BRIEFED SELECTED JOURNALISTS AT 11 A.M. JAN 10 ON FRENCH RECTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE. IN BRIEF, SUFFERT SAID FRANCE WOULD FINALLY ACCEPT THE INVITATION, BUT IN SO DOING WOULD RAISE SEVERAL QUESTIONS AND EXPRESS CERTAIN RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE. THE LEAD ARTICLE BY MCHEL TATU IN THE JANUARY 11 LE MONDE TITLED "PARIS IS NOT VERY FAVORABLE TO A CONSUMERS' FRONT" AND SUMMARIZED BELOW CONTAINS THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF SUFFERT'S EXPOSITION OF THE FRENCH POSITION AND THUS IS ALSO PROBABLY BASED ON THEQUAI SPOKESMAN'S BRIEFING. END CONFIDENTIAL.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED SUMMARY

"DOES NOT THE CONFERENCE PROPOSED BY MR. NIXON RISK APPEARING TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO CONSTITUTE A "COMMON FRONT" OF LARGE OIL CONSUMING COUNTRIES TO ORGANIZE A "RIPOS" TO THE WITHHOLDING AND HIGH PRICE POLICIES OF THE PRODUCERS? WHY ARE THESE NINE COUNTRIES ALONE SELECTED TO DISCUSS IT? THESE ARE THE QUESTIONS THAT ARE BEING ASKED IN PARIS BEFORE GIVING TO THE AMERICANS AREPLY THAT WILL PROBABLY BE POSITIVE (THE SUBJECT IS CONSIDERED TOO IMPORTANT FOR PARIS TO BE ABLE TO STAND ASIDE) BUT WHICH WILL BE ACCOMPANIED EVEN MORE CERTAINLY BY ALL SORTS OF REQUESTS FOR EXPLANATIONS AND DETALS."

ON THE FIRST QUESTION, TATU SAYS THE AMERICAN POSITION HAS CHANGED SOMEWHAT SINCE THE SECRETARY'S DEC 12 PROPOSAL. THEY HAVE TAKEN CARE TO INFORM OPEC COUNTRIES BUT STILL WANT TO SECURE A COMMON CONSUMER POSITION BEFORE MEETING WITH THEM. HE SAYS THE CLIMATE FOR SUCH A MEETING AFTER THE SCHLESINGER AND FORD "WARNINGS" IS HARDLY PROPITIOUS NOW. MOREOVER, TATU UNDERLINES THE PRESENT DIFFICULTY (GIVEN THE ARAB EMBARGO) FOR THE US GOVERNMENT TO MAKE BIATERAL DEALS WITH THE ARAB STATES, AS OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES ARE DOING.

TATU DESCRIBES THE CHOICE OF THE EIGHT COUNTRIES INVITED AS BASED ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE OECD HIGH LEVEL PETROLEUM GROUP AND ASKS WETHER THIS REALLY FILLS PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS, NOTING NORWAY'S INCLUSION AND DENMARK AND IRELAND'S CONFIDENTIAL

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EXCLUSION. HE SAYS PARIS WOULD LIKE OTHER COUNTRIES, NOTABLY LARGE, POOR COUNTRIES LIKE INDIA, TO HAVE THEIR SAY.

WHILE COMMENTING FAVORABLY O THE PROPOSAL TO FORM A TASK FORCE TO WORK ON THE PROBLEM OF NEW ENERGY RESOURCES, ATATU NOTES THAT FRENCH POLICYMAKERS QUESTION HOW THE NUMEROUS AND COMPLICATED PROBLEMS INVOLVED CAN BE DEALT WITH DURING THE NECESSARILY SHORT TIME SPAN OF A FOREIGN MINISTER'

MEETING.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, TATU CONTINUES, NONE OF THE INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS IS PREPARED TO ABANDON BILATERAL DEALS PRESENTLY UNDER NEGOTIATION WITH ARAB GOVERNMENTS AND WHICH ARE AT PRESENT TIME "THE ONLY EFFECTIVE METHOD DEvised BY THE GOVERNMENTS TO GUARANTEE THE SECURITY OF THEIR OIL SUPPLIES." IN CONCLUSION, TATU STATES THAT WASHINGTON MEETING, AT LEAST INITIALLY, IS LIKELY TO BE FORMALITY WITHOUT SUBSTANCE.

COMMENT: WHILE SOME OF QUESTIONS RAISED MAY BE SEEN AS FRENCH EFFORT TO BUILD RECORD WITH ARABS AND THIRD WORLD, AS WELL AS WITHIN EC, THEY DO REFLECT RANGE OF FRENCH MISGIVINGS. THEY MAY ALSO SERVE AS DELAYING TACTIC WHILE FRENCH MAKE EFFORT TO BRING EC PARTNERS TOGETHER SO THAT EUROPEANS CAN FACE US AND JAPAN AS COHESIVE GROUP IN WASHINGTON MEETING. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE FRENCH HAVE PUT IT CLEARLY ON RECORD THAT THEY DO NOT INTEND TO SLOW DOWN THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH ARABS PENDING OUTCOME OF PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSERVATION, PETROLEUM, SUPPLIES, ENERGY, LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, IMPORTS, FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PARIS00840
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740150/aaaabvpe.tel
Line Count: 135
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: PARIS 743
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by worrelsw>; APPROVED <15 MAY 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER FRENCH REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S INVITATION TO ENERGY MEETING
TAGS: ENRG, FR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005